

Mobile and Outreach
Service Mapping:
A Current State Analysis
The Niagara Northwest
Story

Completed May 2024 by
Starling Strategic Consulting on
behalf of the
Greater Hamilton Health Network

Greater
Hamilton
Health
Network



*Building community
health together.*

3.2 Niagara Northwest's Story

Summary: Service Provision in Niagara Northwest

This report provides a current state analysis of the healthcare and social service landscape in Niagara Northwest as part of a broader initiative by the GHHN to improve service integration for marginalized populations. It is important to note that Niagara Northwest's (NNW) story is told primarily through publicly available data as only one of the providers was able to validate their data in the timeframe of the project.

Key Findings:

Service Gaps: There is a notable deficiency in social support services and comprehensive operational data, with significant disparities in the breadth of services offered across the region. This highlights a need for a more diversified approach to service provision beyond the clinical focus, particularly in direct social care and support services.

Operational Strengths: The region demonstrates strong capabilities in addressing critical health issues such as mental health, substance use, and housing needs. These strengths underscore a focused commitment to tackling some of the most urgent health challenges facing the community.

Staffing and Resource Allocation: The absence of detailed staffing data poses challenges in assessing the adequacy of service delivery and resource allocation. This gap indicates potential issues in ensuring that service provision is aligned with community needs.

Partnerships and Collaboration: While effective collaborations are evident and contribute positively to service delivery, the lack of comprehensive data on partnerships for some areas obscures the full scope of collaborative networks. Enhancing transparency and documentation in this area could further improve service integration and effectiveness.

Strategic Recommendations:

1. **Broaden Service Coordination:** Address significant service gaps by exploring opportunities to coordinate, integrate, or expand services in underrepresented areas such as direct social support services.
2. **Strengthen Staffing Strategies:** Enhance data collection and transparency regarding staffing to ensure that service capacity meets community needs.
3. **Expand Collaborative Networks:** Build on existing collaborations to further connect services and ensure a seamless care pathway.

Conclusion: The analysis of healthcare and social service provision in Niagara Northwest, while limited by the number of providers (3) and the depth of validated information, highlights the challenges and strengths within the region. Moving forward, focusing on strategic enhancements in service coordination, staffing, and collaboration will improve the accessibility and effectiveness of services. These efforts are essential for developing a responsive and equitable service environment that meets the diverse needs of all community members in Niagara Northwest.

3.2.1 Who’s Doing What?

An analysis of the types of healthcare and social services offered by the providers in NNW is outlined in the tables and summary below.

Provider Name	General Health Services	Contraception Family Planning	Wound Care	First Aid	Chronic Disease Management	Mental Health and Counselling	Substance Use Treatment	Preventive Care and Screenings	Maternal and Reproductive Health	Immunizations	Gender-Affirming Care	STI /HIV testing	STI/HIV treatment	Harm Reduction Supply Distribution	Linking/Bridging to Clinical Services
Niagara Region Outreach Nurses		X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Positive Living Niagara		X						X				X	X	X	X
Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team														X	X

Table 7: Healthcare services offered by NNW providers.

Provider Name	Wraparound Mental Health Service Referral	Food Provision and Nutritional Support	Housing and Shelter Assistance	Employment and Education Support	Social Welfare Services	Linking/Bridging to Social Services
Niagara Region Outreach Nurses						X
Positive Living Niagara						X
Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team			X			X

Table 8: Social services offered by NNW providers.

Niagara Northwest: % Providers Offering Each Service

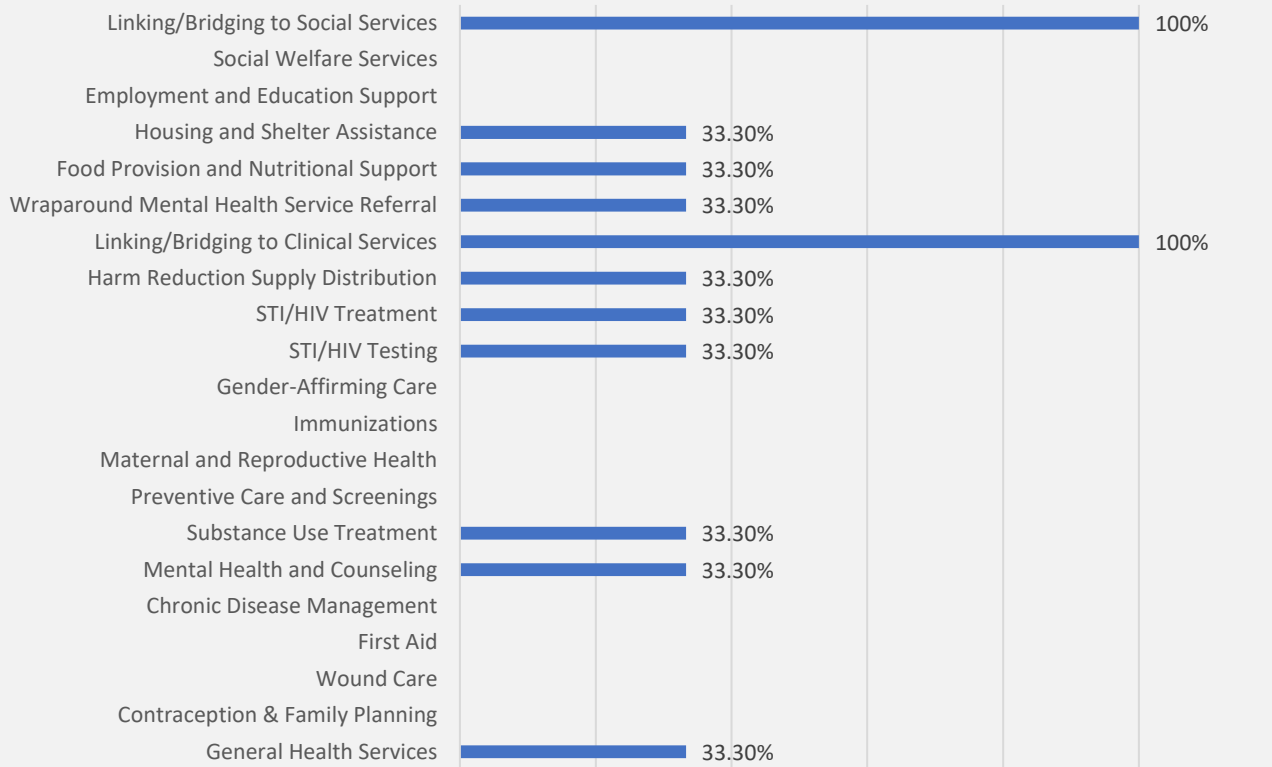


Chart 3: Percent of NNW providers offering each service.

Service Offerings Data Interpretation:

Gap Analysis - The service provision assessment in the Niagara Northwest region, informed by publicly available data, identifies significant gaps, notably in social support services and detailed operational data across providers. Specific gaps include:

- Employment and Education Support
- Food Provision and Nutritional Support

- Social Welfare Services

The identified service gaps suggest that, while clinical services are robust within one primary provider, there is a lack of breadth in service offerings by other providers, particularly in direct social care and detailed service accessibility.

Current Strengths - The region benefits from specialized providers who deliver targeted services, addressing critical health and social needs:

- Broad Medical Services: Offered primarily by the Niagara Region Outreach Nurses, addressing a wide spectrum of medical needs.
- Focused Mental Health and Substance Use Services: Provided by Positive Living Niagara, including harm reduction and STI/HIV testing and treatment.
- Housing and Shelter Assistance: Specifically offered by the Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team, addressing critical shelter needs.

Strategic Implications and Additional Considerations - The data analysis underscores the need for:

- A more integrated care model that bridges the gap between extensive clinical services and the sparse social support network.
- Expansion and diversification of social support services to foster a more comprehensive care system.
- Improved data collection and validation to ensure a thorough understanding of service accessibility and to facilitate strategic planning.

In summary, while Niagara Northwest has a strong primary healthcare provider in the Niagara Region Outreach Nurses, the overall healthcare and social service system requires significant enhancement. Strengthening the integration of services, addressing social care gaps, and ensuring thorough data collection are key strategic needs. These improvements are essential to develop holistic and sustainable health and social care systems for the diverse and underserved populations in Niagara Northwest.

3.2.2 Who's being served?

An analysis of the priority populations eligible to access the mobile and outreach-based services in NNW is outlined in the table and summary below.

Provider Name	Encampment Residents	People who use substances or experiencing addiction	Women and Gender-Diverse Populations	Individuals with Limited Access to Healthcare	Youth and Young Adults (up to 24 years old)	Men in the shelter system
Niagara Region Outreach Nurses	X	X	X	X	X	
Positive Living Niagara		X		X		
Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team	X	X		X		

Table 9: Priority Populations Served in Niagara Northwest. Note: Positive Living Niagara noted that their services are anyone living in or visiting Niagara Region and that the Streetworks Program is for people who inject drugs. Niagara Outreach Nurses noted they also serve single parent/low income families, refugees, new immigrants, Indigenous populations. If any of the providers offer services tailored specifically for men involved in the shelter system, this information was not publicly available at the time of the analysis.

Service Users	Percent of Providers
Encampment Residents	66.7%
People who use substances or experiencing addiction	66.7%
Women and Gender-Diverse Populations	33.3%
Individuals with Limited Access to Healthcare	100%
Youth and Young Adults (up to 24 years old)	0

Chart 4: Percent of NNW providers who serve each priority population group.

Data Interpretation of Populations Served:

In Niagara Northwest, healthcare providers cater to a broad range of populations, reflecting the region's diverse health and social needs. Service delivery is characterized by both a comprehensive and specialized focus.

In Niagara Northwest, the healthcare providers are tailored to address specific community needs, ensuring targeted support for various vulnerable groups. Niagara Region Outreach Nurses provide extensive healthcare services to a range of populations, including encampment residents, individuals with substance use issues, women and gender-diverse populations, and those with limited access to healthcare. Their comprehensive approach covers a wide array of medical and social needs, reflecting their role as a pivotal healthcare provider in the region. Positive Living Niagara focuses on serving individuals who use substances or are experiencing addiction, providing essential services geared towards this demographic. Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team targets their services primarily towards encampment residents and individuals with limited access to healthcare, emphasizing harm reduction and linking these populations to necessary clinical services.

Cross-Tabulation Summary of Healthcare and Social Services in Niagara Northwest:

Niagara Region Outreach Nurses	Offers a comprehensive range of healthcare services, notably including general health and gender-affirming care, serving encampment residents, people using substances or experiencing addiction, women and gender-diverse populations, and those with limited access to healthcare.
Positive Living Niagara	Provides specialized care primarily for individuals experiencing substance use issues, focusing on targeted interventions.
Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team	Concentrates on harm reduction and linking to clinical services, with a strong emphasis on housing and shelter assistance, targeting encampment residents and individuals with limited access to healthcare.
Key Observations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Region Outreach Nurses are crucial for their extensive service provision, ensuring that a wide array of medical needs are met within the community. • Positive Living Niagara targets specific health challenges related to substance use, providing essential care to this particular demographic. • Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team plays a critical role in emergency and crisis intervention, focusing on immediate needs and connecting individuals to ongoing healthcare resources. 	

Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team	7am-11pm	7am-11pm	7am-11pm	7am-11pm	7am-11pm	9am - 11pm	9am - 11pm
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Table 10: Service Delivery Schedules for Niagara Northwest Providers.

Provider Name	Direct Access	Referral Access	Self-Referral Accepted
Niagara Region Outreach Nurses	X		
Positive Living Niagara	X		
Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team	X		

Table 11: Service Access Models for Niagara Northwest Providers.

Niagara Northwest Service Delivery Models and Operational Hours:

Niagara Region Outreach Nurses: Service hours are stated to vary across the week with some occasional evenings and weekends. While flexibility in service delivery can be helpful, it can also lead to confusion on the part of service users if a set schedule is not established.

Positive Living Niagara: Offers extended service hours through the StreetWorks program, with mobile services available until 10:30 PM on weekdays, catering to individuals who may require services beyond standard business hours.

Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team: Provides the most comprehensive access with operational hours from 7 AM to 11 PM, including weekends, ensuring vital health services are available for emergencies and urgent care needs across varied schedules.

Geographic Considerations and Accessibility: Services in Niagara Northwest are presumed to be offered primarily in Urban and High-Density Areas (Downtown Core), with coverage extending to Suburban and Peri-Urban Areas and some presence in rural or remote areas, reflecting a commitment to serving diverse geographic populations.

Service Access Methods: All three providers in Niagara Northwest offer direct access to eligible populations, simplifying the process for those seeking assistance and minimizing barriers to entry.

Insights from Service Delivery Models:

Extended Hours and Accessibility: Positive Living Niagara's extended hours and weekend services by the Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team demonstrate an understanding of the community's needs, providing valuable access points outside of typical service hours.

Service Patterns Uncertainty: Without specific operational times, the service patterns of the Niagara Region Outreach Nurses remain unclear, potentially affecting the perception of their accessibility and the actual reach of services provided.

Strategic Implications:

- **Service Flexibility and Integration:** Varied operational hours across providers underscore the necessity for flexible service delivery models that cater to the unique lifestyles within the community.
- **Enhanced Data Collection:** Improved transparency and availability of detailed operational data are crucial for understanding service efficacy and for informed strategic planning.

Niagara Northwest's healthcare providers adapt to the community's needs with services that range from weekday evenings to weekend availability, ensuring substantial coverage. Yet, the lack of detailed operational data and gaps in continuous care point towards areas for strategic improvement. Enhancing flexibility, data transparency, and integration of services will be instrumental in advancing health outcomes and resource efficiency within the region.

3.2.4 Funding Sources

Public and Diversified Funding: No definitive insights about funding can be assigned to NNW due to a lack of validated funding source data. Niagara Region Outreach Nurses confirmed they receive public funding. The remaining two providers in Niagara Northwest are likely supported by public funding, possibly supplemented by diversified funding models. This implies a reliance on governmental and potentially varied additional sources, which may influence the scope and sustainability of services offered.

3.2.5 Partnerships, Staffing Models, and Evaluation Metrics

The data collected on partnerships, staffing models, and evaluation metrics in NNW is outlined in the figure, table, and summary below.

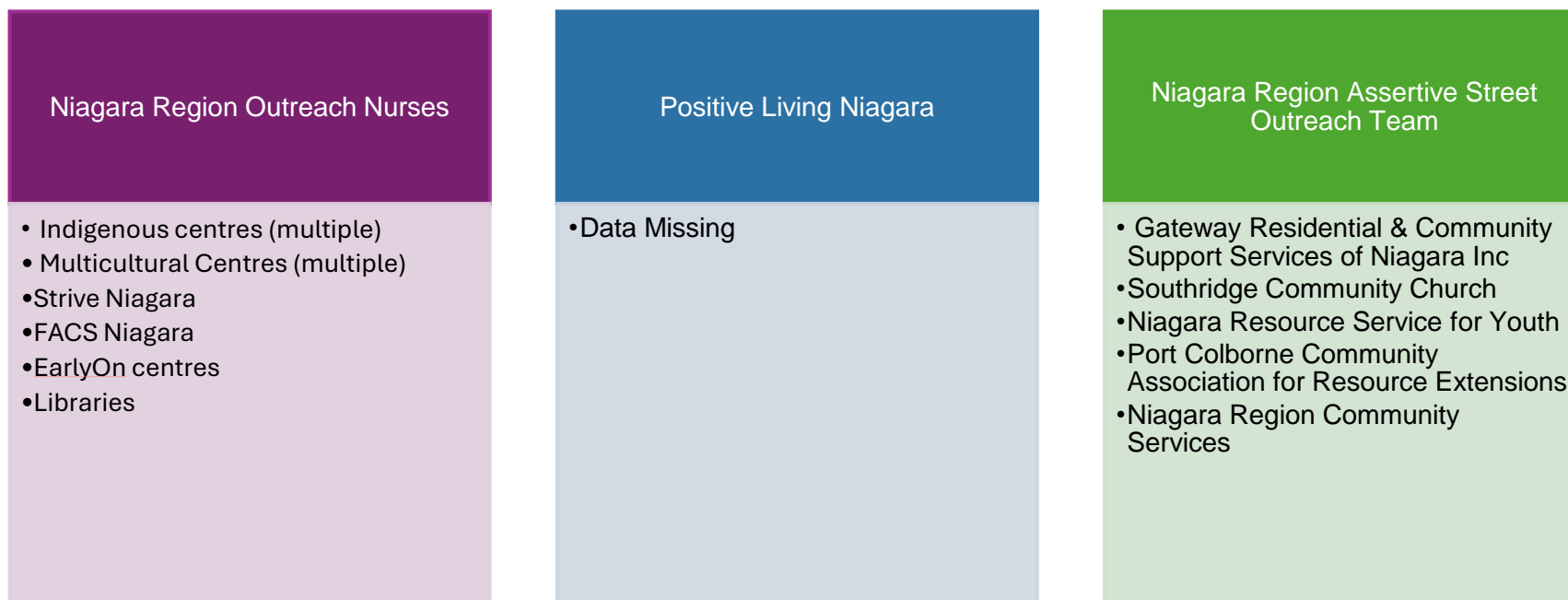


Figure 3: Partnerships in mobile and outreach service delivery in Niagara Northwest.

Provider Name	Feedback from diverse populations	Service utilization and reach metrics	Impact on community health and well-being	Notes
Niagara Region Outreach Nurses		X	X	
Positive Living Niagara		X		Despite missing data, assumption has been

Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team		X		made that some level of service utilization is collected by the provider organization.
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Table 12: Evaluation Metrics Used by NNW Providers.

Data Interpretation Summary

Partnerships - The Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team maintains a robust cross-collaborative approach, partnering with various local organizations, including Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc, Southridge Community Church, and Niagara Resource Service for Youth, among others, to enhance service delivery through integrated community support. In contrast, the Niagara Region Outreach Nurses collaborate extensively with diverse community centres and services such as multiple Indigenous and Multicultural Centres, Strive Niagara, FACS Niagara, EarlyOn centres, and libraries, indicating a broad scope of community integration. Data on partnerships for Positive Living Niagara is currently missing, highlighting a gap in available information on their collaborative efforts.

Staffing Models - The absence of detailed staffing data, including Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) and other staffing breakdowns for all providers, restricts a thorough analysis of service capacity and workforce adequacy. This gap hinders the assessment of whether current staffing levels adequately meet community needs or if there are significant service delivery constraints due to workforce limitations.

Success Metrics - While specific metrics on feedback from diverse populations and the direct impact on community health and well-being are missing from most of the providers (with the exception of Niagara Region Outreach Nurses), there is an assumption that some level of service utilization data is being collected by all the providers. This suggests an ongoing effort to monitor service reach and effectiveness, although the lack of comprehensive data prevents a full understanding of the outcomes and efficiency of the services provided.

Strategic Implications and Recommendations

Enhanced Data Transparency and Collection - A critical need exists for improved transparency and systematic data collection across all areas of service provision in NNW. There is a specific requirement for detailed information on partnerships and staffing. This will enable better strategic planning, resource allocation, and community engagement, ensuring that services are aligned with community needs.

Strengthening Partnerships - For providers like Positive Living Niagara, where partnership data is missing, there is an opportunity to develop and disclose collaborative relationships with community organizations. Emulating the robust partnership models of the Niagara Region Assertive Street Outreach Team can broaden service reach and enhance community impact, ensuring a comprehensive support network is available.

Workforce Development - Addressing the gaps in staffing data and enhancing workforce capabilities should be prioritized. Developing a clear understanding of staffing needs based on service utilization metrics and aligning them with community demands will likely improve service delivery effectiveness. Initiatives could include targeted recruitment, specialized training, and expanding staff numbers where needed.

Robust Impact Assessment - Implementing comprehensive methods for tracking the effectiveness of services is crucial. This includes establishing feedback mechanisms from diverse populations and conducting detailed assessments of the impact on community health. Such measures will provide vital insights that can drive service improvements and underscore the value of the services provided.

Optimize Resource Utilization - With the Niagara Region Outreach Nurses and the Assertive Street Outreach Team showcasing broad and effective partnerships, it is essential to ensure that these collaborations are leveraged to optimize resource utilization. This could involve coordinated service schedules, shared training, and joint funding initiatives to enhance service delivery and avoid duplication.

In Niagara Northwest, while there is a structured approach to healthcare and social service delivery supported by public and possibly diversified funding, significant gaps in data on staffing and success metrics pose challenges to fully understanding and optimizing service provision. Addressing these gaps through strategic data enhancement, collaborative efforts, and workforce development will be crucial in building a more responsive and effective service delivery model for the community.